

Our space will not allow us to dwell longer upon this annual report of the Utica asylum. We have referred to a few salient points. The remainder is equally disingenuous and misleading.

In conclusion, we would suggest to the Managers of that institution an inquiry of this sort. They desire to obtain and hold the confidence of the community. To this end, in their dealings with the public in all its relations, should they not place more reliance upon a frank and straightforward conduct on the part of all the officials, than upon the mere administrative finesse of their Superintendent?

Medical electricity. By ROBERTS BARTHOLOW, A.M., M.D., LL.D. Philadelphia: Henry C. Lea's Son & Co., 1882.

The appearance of a second edition of this practical work on electro-therapeutics reminds us that we yet owe an unexpressed debt of thanks both to author and publisher for their creditable performance.

We welcome, in the first place, a work that is based upon the laws of electro-physics, rather than those of electro-metaphysics. The medical profession has been too long misled by visionary and verbose treatises on electricity, whose pages might as well, so far as science is concerned, have been plucked from the pages of the veriest charlatans. Such works may be classed among the "dime novels" of scientific literature.

It has often been remarked that electro-therapeutics has suffered much from having fallen into the hands of peripatetic quacks. Again, it has suffered much from the superstitious ignorance of the community, who persist in confounding the electric with the vital principle; but it may be asked with a fair expectation of an affirmative answer, whether the semi-authoritative works of incompetent men in our own ranks have not after all inflicted more damage in the minds of the sober practitioner, than either vulgar ignorance or known quackery. In these works electricity has been held up as the great cure-all, the methods of administration have been blundering, the results of treatment confused and badly observed.

If we except from our American medical literature on this subject the work of Meyer, translated from the German by Dr. Hammond, and a few others, all the rest may be condemned in general terms.

It is above this visionary muddle of quasi-science that Dr. Bartholow's work elevates us, and leads us to hope that justice may yet be rendered to the curative power of electricity in medicine.

In glancing over the volume we recognize many familiar illustrations, and find an equally familiar text describing them. This is, of course, to be expected in a systematic treatise upon electrophysics and electro-therapeutics. But we note also an additional fact, that lends a keen zest to the perusal of the work, and this is, that Dr. Bartholow has not failed to introduce in their appropriate places most of the new facts and applications of electricity to medicine that have been brought forward in recent years. In short, the book is fully up to the times. For instance, a chapter is given to magneto-therapy, and this subject, lately revived, is fully and impartially treated. Due credit is given to our own countryman, Dr. John Vansant, who, in his paper "On the Physiological Action of Magnetism," published in the *Journal of Psychological Medicine*, New York, 1870, details the results of his studies upon the influence of magnets not only on animal but also on vegetable life. A brief résumé of these results, interesting both from a practical point of view and from the fact that they have been unnoticed by others retraversing the same ground, is given in our editorial columns.

Static electricity, its methods and uses, receives very full treatment. This we should expect, not only from the large amount of attention lately given to this branch of electro-therapeutics, nor from the excellent results credited to its employment, but also from the special study which the author himself has given to it. The efficacy of statical electricity in the treatment of disease does not lack the corroborative testimony of brilliant names and reputations. Revived by Dr. Golding Bird, in England, about 1830, its curative effects were accepted as conclusive by the conservative staff of physicians at Guy's Hospital. Dr. Addison of this staff reported many noteworthy cures effected by its use. Another member of the staff, Sir William Gull, was convinced of the superior curative efficacy of static to faradic electricity, (galvanism had not at that time come into general employment,) and Dr. Wilks, of the same staff, felt confident that the new method of galvanization and faradization had not yet superseded the treatment by the statical electrization. The modern revival by Prof. Charcot of the medical use of statical electricity is well known, likewise the important share in this revival to be credited to his pupil, Dr. Vigouroux, who early and late has followed up every detail of the work in the most scientific manner. In our own country the first formal publication and introduction of the modern views upon the subject were made by Dr. William J. Morton, of New York, in a

paper read before the New York Academy of Medicine, March 3, 1881; Dr. Morton pointing out at the same time the existence of a new current, obtainable from the static machine, and in many respects resembling the ordinary faradic current, though in many respects also preferable to it.

Curiously, Dr. Bartholow, who seems to have taken a quick interest in the administration of the revived form of electrization, had hit upon a similar current, and had embodied a description of it in the work now under observation, and published but a short time after Dr. Morton's publication. This fact Dr. Bartholow generously alludes to in a foot-note to his preface. Next in order, Drs. Hammond, Beard, and Rockwell carefully followed up the new facts. Dr. Knight recalled a continued experience with feeble administrations, and took up the subject with renewed ardor, and to-day the statical electrical machines in this country in active use may be counted by hundreds; and already the key-note of the proper direction of study in this direction has been struck in discussions upon the differential indications for the use of dynamic and statical electrization. If the revival of statical electricity has done nothing else, it has at least secured a fresh hearing to the undeniable claims of electricity, rightly managed, to be considered as one of the indispensable means of cure at the command of the modern physician, particularly in a large class of subacute and chronic affections. And seldom have these claims been more practically and more agreeably placed before the practitioner than in Dr. Bartholow's work.

We should have been glad to see more than two or three lines given to the surprising therapeutical results obtained by the application of metals,—not that we by any means believe that the results in question are due to any inherent medical qualities the metals possess beyond that possessed by magnetic influence, or by weak electric currents, but we think that the author is scarcely correct when he refers to the “meagreness of the information” on this subject as a reason for not treating it more fully.

For besides the inaugural thesis of M. Burq, published in 1851, and his subsequent papers, there exist the important report of the commission appointed by the Société de Biologie in 1876, and consisting of MM. Charcot, Luys, and Dumontpallier; and numerous observations by Vigouroux, Oulmont, Landolt, Debove, Bourneville, and Regnard in France, Seppili, Maragliani, and Maggiorani in Italy, Müller, Rosenthal, Schiff, Adler, Rumpf, and Miers in Germany, MacCall Anderson and others in England, and by Hammond in America.

We welcome as an important feature in Dr. Bartholow's work, the full treatment given to the question of electro-diagnosis. The remarkable qualitative changes classified by Erb under the general term "*Entartungsreaction*," or "reaction of degeneration," should, however, be more fully treated of. Their full comprehension is essential to both a rational treatment and a prognosis. Dr. Bartholow does not, however, neglect this branch of the subject entirely, but states sufficient to serve as an elementary working basis.

The book is conveniently divided into : Part I, on electro-physics ; II, on electro-physiology ; III, on electro-diagnosis ; IV, on electro-therapeutics ; V, on electricity in surgery ; and VI, on thermo-electricity. These subjects are treated of in 286 pages ; the type is good, the illustrations of average quality, and there is everywhere to be observed the characteristic book-making genius of the author.

We may safely say that there is to-day no book on this subject in the English language more trustworthy than this one. While not encyclopædic, it yet contains all that the general practitioner, or, indeed, the expert, will ever put into practice.

The medical profession was in want of just such a treatise, and the need is now adequately supplied.

W. J. M.

Two hard cases. By W. W. GODDING, M.D., Superintendent of the Government Asylum at Washington, D. C. Boston : Houghton, Mifflin, & Co., 1882.

The present volume is published for the very frankly avowed and original reason that the author "had observed, during the examination of the medical expert witnesses at the Guiteau trial, that one must be very low down in the scale not to have at least written a book or been elected an honorary member of some foreign medical society." This sly sarcasm at some of the government experts fittingly introduces a vein of sarcasm which runs through the whole book. The Two Hard Cases, who are the heroes of the volume, are a patient of the Taunton Asylum, and Guiteau. The first patient was admitted to the asylum in consequence of an attempted murder, the attempt being made through jealousy. The history of the case is clearly written, but, it must be confessed, somewhat meagre. The psychological manifestations of the patient almost wholly related to minor and major immoralities. The motives for these immoralities were never clear. Wild escapes from the asylum and as